

## Hood Canal Coordinating Council Lead Entity Technical Advisory Group Meeting Notes

July 07, 2011

Point No Point Treaty Council Conference Room

### **19 Attendees:**

- \*Richard Brocksmith-Hood Canal Coordinating Council (HCCC)
- \*Luke Cherney- Hood Canal Coordinating Council (HCCC)
- \*Carrie Cook Tabor-US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFW)
- \*Micah Wait- Wild Fish Conservancy (WFC)
- \*Doris Small- WA Dept of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)
- \*Dan Hannafious- Hood Canal Salmon Enhancement Group (HCSEG)
- \*Marc McHenry- US Forest Service (USFS)
- \*Jed Moore- Long Live The Kings (LLTK)
- \*Joy Waltermire- Long Live The Kings (LLTK)
- \*Jody Walters- NOAA NMFS
- \*Evan Bauder- Mason Conservation District (MCD)
- \*Randy Johnson- Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe (JSK Tribe)
- Joseph Pavel (standing in for \*Alex Gouley)- Skokomish Tribe
- Heidi Huber- Hood Canal Coordinating Council (HCCC)
- Rebecca Benjamin- North Olympic Salmon Coalition (NOSC)
- Vern Rutter-HPLC Chair
- Cheryl Baumann- North Olympic Peninsula Lead Entity (NOPE)
- Pat McCullough- ESA Incorporated
- Mike Ramsey- Recreation and Conservation Office/SRFB
- (\*TAG Member)

**Purposes:** To review final project applications, evaluate their technical merits, and determine a final, technically-ranked project list to be forwarded to the Habitat Project List Committee for their review.

**Available Funding: \$3,183,584**

**Total SRFB Request: \$4,593,326**

**Conflict of interest discussion:** Reviewed conflict of interest policies from Process Guide. TAG members stated which projects they *didn't* score and would recuse themselves from discussing other than to provide factual responses to questions:

- Richard Brocksmith (HCCC) – Union River Estuary Restoration
- Luke Cherney (HCCC)- Knotweed Control Year 4
- Carrie Cook Tabor (USFW)- Scored all projects
- Micah Wait (WFC)- Nearshore Fish Use Assessment, Dosewallips Floodplain/ Estuary Restoration- 2011
- Doris Small (WDFW)- Union River Estuary Restoration
- Dan Hannafious (HCSEG)- Big Q. Delta Acquisition, Big Q. Habitat Restoration ph 3, Tahuya River LWD Placement ph 2, Lower Big Beef Ck Restoration ph 1, Knotweed Control, Union River Estuary Restoration
- Marc McHenry (USFS)- Scored all projects
- Jed Moore (LLTK)- Lilliwaup Creek 100% Design
- Joy Waltermire (LLTK)-Lilliwaup Creek 100% Design
- Jody Walters (NMFS)- ranked all projects
- Evan Bauder (MCD)- Skokomish Acquisition, Skokomish Estuary Restoration

Randy Johnson (JSK Tribe) - WA Harbor Restoration

Alex Gouley (Skokomish Tribe)- Skokomish Acquisition, Skokomish Estuary Restoration

**Public Comment:**

No public was in attendance and thus no comment. Several comments regarding the Union River Estuary Restoration Project were received by the HCCC prior to the meeting and were distributed to the TAG via email in the last few weeks. The TAG is asked to only consider comments that are technical in nature. The HPLC reviews non-technical comments.

*Citizen:* Many of the accusations regarding HCCC's process seem unfounded. HCCC is careful to prevent conflict of interest.

**Review Process for Normalizing/Summarizing Technical Scores:**

The group reviewed the normalization process to address observer bias.

Colored bins mark similarly scored projects. This is just a starting point. The conversation today will determine the final technically ranked list, if changes are needed.

The HCCC 2011 Process Guide lays out the process for domain scoring. Two reviewers had questions about assigned domain scores for the nearshore fish use project.

*Question:* Why did the Nearshore fish use assessment project receive 25 points when many of the activities will be in the key watersheds?

*Response:* The project will follow fish in the natal sub-estuaries and in the nearshore (both significant and non-significant areas for summer chum). This project is in the domains of 35, 25, and 5 points. HCCC staff averaged and rounded up to domain 2.

*Project sponsor:* project would be broadly based, we would work in nearshore, natal sub-estuaries, and non significant areas.

*Comment:* Why place this in specific domains? Sounds like this project will help reveal areas of importance that haven't been called out.

**Review of Interim Results:**

Reviewed initial ranked list.

**How was the application and review process this year?**

*Comment:* there was a difference in the quality of the applications making it hard to review. The public is viewing these projects on HWS, we need to make sure we have thorough applications.

*Comment:* why do we have a process if project sponsors aren't going to follow it? Should we be rewarding sponsors that submit less than complete applications?

**Should we score projects that had incomplete information the same as projects that had really complete information?** We don't want to reward sponsors that submit poor applications.

*Response:* TAG needs to focus on the technical merits of the project and benefit to salmon.

Sponsors need to be notified if applications are incomplete.

*Comment:* Often hard for new sponsors to get up to speed on the process, etc.

*Response:* HCCC is there to support everyone who has questions or requests training.

**What were people using to review project information, HWS or PRISM (both)?**

Several people used HWS only but found that information was lacking.

*Comment:* It is confusing having two places for project information. All the project information was not on both sites.

*HCCC:* The process guide requires sponsors to keep PRISM information and HWS consistent. This isn't happening. PRISM is the database for RCO (grant side), tracks only proposed or funded projects. HWS

tracks entire lifecycle of project, great for implementation reporting and public access/outreach. There seems to be an issue with versions of documents not getting updated on both sites. A shared attachments tool hopefully released next year should help.

*Comment:* PRISM metrics don't match up with HWS metrics making it difficult to fill out. HCCC will be working to provide better guidance on entering metrics.

### **Group Evaluation of Individual Projects from Top to Bottom:**

#### **Big Quilcene Delta Acquisition**

Incomplete and confusing information on HWS, but was consistently scored high by reviewers. Wasn't clear what will be happening for the restoration piece.

*Comment:* acquisition is such a crucial piece. Removal of structures is a no brainer. Reconnection of tidal channel network makes sense, I'm confident that a well thought out design will be created.

Sponsor has a history of great projects. Others support the idea that the acquisition is a key piece.

Project has a significant chunk of match.

*Sponsor response:* Restoration proposal is very preliminary, was added for the coastal wetlands grant. Restoration money would be for demolition and removal of fill.

*Condition proposal:* the TAG gets an opportunity to review 30% design before proceeding to full design and construction. Need to ensure that what we get is what we funded.

*Comments:* Is SRFB money going toward restoration? What is the certainty of success for coastal wetlands grant of \$900,000? If match falls through can we fund the acquisition? Should we set aside the full 540,000 to ensure the acquisition happens? Coastal wetlands grants awarded in December (may know in Sept).

#### **How has match uncertainty been addressed with other projects?**

*Response:* If some match is lost sponsors have asked for a cost increase or decrease in match. The TAG went through this with the Donovan Creek project.

*Comment:* We need to be careful about this process and make sure we treat all projects fairly. It is dangerous to start divvying things up differently. Discussed NOPL process.

*Proposed Condition:* Application must describe the project (restoration piece must be described), and discuss contingency plan (what will happen with funding if coastal wetlands money falls through)???

Have we ever asked for a contingency plan from other sponsors? Not really. Lets drop that.

*Comment:* Have you looked at the likelihood of avulsion into the channel? Will that change your restoration plans? This restoration will address common sense actions that won't affect future larger restoration plans.

Group supports proposal as stated below.

**Final Conditions:** TAG should review and concur with 30 or 60% design before proceeding to final design for project, sponsor needs to update application materials.

#### **Dosewallips Floodplain & Estuary Restoration 2011**

Consistently scored high by reviewers. Still needs a complete narrative. Project sponsor will attach as soon as possible as it seems they uploaded an older version that didn't finish answering all of the questions.

*Response:* The site visit was extremely helpful. Have also seen successful implementation of previous phases.

*Comment:* The \$76,000 contingency fund in the budget is not allowed by RCO. HCCC will work with the project sponsor to address this.

If there are cost over-runs sponsors can request a cost increase (up to 20% of the total project budget) but this takes time and is not always approved.

*Comment:* Why wasn't the contingency issue noticed earlier in the preapplication phase, who should be looking for these things? HCCC, project reviewers, both?

### **Skokomish Estuary Restoration Phase 3**

Consistently scored high by reviewers.

*Comment:* Are you incorporating lessons learned from phase 1 and 2? Yes.

*Comment:* Is dynamite being considered to create tidal channels? Suggested reviewing Steve Rumrell's work. Dynamite can be extremely cost effective.

### **Maynard Nearshore Restoration**

Well written and clear proposal. Design will be complete in December. SRFB request can be adjusted then if appropriate. County will not allow removal of the existing trail. Need 14 feet width for the trail. Match- potentially NOAA, TNC, Coastal Wetlands

*Comment:* How much benefit to salmon for the money?

*Response:* Chum in snow creek are experiencing a resurgence, creating this small pocket estuary would be great habitat. The project as a whole will create many little habitat benefits. Beach nourishment will benefit forage fish.

The Chumsortium is actively participating in the planning of this project.

### **Union River Estuary Restoration**

Public comments were distributed to the TAG previously (white paper, etc). The purpose of sharing these public comments without much context from the HCCC was to ensure that the 14 members of the TAG would independently evaluate all of the strengths and weaknesses of the proposal, yielding an independent assessment.

Many of the comments were focused on process, and other topics are more appropriately discussed during the HPLC meeting. Comments with technical merit should be considered by the TAG. Ex: statement about the historic habitat type of the property.

*Comment:* Has the habitat gain for salmon been exaggerated?

Ideally we'd like to remove the entire dike, but this isn't feasible because of the community trails. This project seems to find the appropriate path forward, technical, given the community constraints.

*Comment:* How functional will the property be for providing habitat, food, etc for salmon?

*Response:* The 300 foot breach is located at the mouth of the river where it will provide the most benefit.

*Comment:* Other areas have small breaches and are highly used by fish. This breach should allow most of the key processes to occur in this marsh.

*Comment:* There have been some concerns about certainty of success- questions around GMA. An earlier condition was that DFW had to go through a legal review and talk to Mason Co. This process was completed and there were no red flags. Several citizen comments concern GMA issues. Should we add a condition that the permitting and legality be completed before funding for final construction is complete? Legal issues are outside of the purview for this group, but we are responsible for ensuring

money is spent on achievable outcomes. That condition is not necessary as the project is somewhat self-regulating; money would not be expended on construction if permits were not provided.

*Comment:* Is this restoration or habitat creation?

*Response:* T-sheets show that it is restoration of pre-existing high salt marsh and tidal channels.

*Comment:* Will the upstream landowner allow fish passage? If fish are present does this affect the agriculture land in terms of regulations? DFW, county, and others are looking into this.

3 small channels blocked currently, should fish have access to these sites?

Salmon center wants the legal right to farm on the property, how will fish affect this? Trying to balance farm and fish and education.

*Comments:* Concern about the tidegates, and possible future failures. What maintenance is needed? Are we putting in elements that will need to be removed or have a high level of maintenance?

*Response:* Staff will be on site, so will be better maintained than a remote site.

Match is coastal wetlands and a couple that are TBD.

**TAG supports: having fish access up into the farm if at all possible as there is an opportunity to gain fish habitat and use for educational purposes. We encourage PNWSC to continue investigating fish access into tributaries.**

#### **Lilliwaup Creek 100% Design Completion**

Group liked the changes made from the preapplication to final application. Appreciated the responsiveness of the sponsors to the reviewers comments.

*Sponsor response:* we are looking into all options to optimize process and function. Will be 50% design associated with this proposal (discussed with landowner, permittees) before moving to 100% design.

*Comment:* There is potential for unknown sediment sources to come down (need to examine DNR road layer) .

*Sponsor response:* We will have someone do a full sediment analysis (roads, changes to roads, etc). We have looked at the DNR road layer.

*Comment:* How is your relationship with the lower property owners?

*Sponsor response:* We are seeing increased interest in improving the habitat for fish.

#### **Knotweed Enhancement- Year 4**

*Comment:* Will we ever be done? When will there need to be maintenance?

*Response:* Total eradication may not ever happen. Goal is to treat for 3-5 years and encourage land owners to maintain their own property, plant conifers.

*Citizen Comment:* the knotweed is spreading rapidly, often from contaminated fill.

Have you reached out to commercial quarries? They have requirements, but staff hasn't had time to work with them. There is an issue with lack of enforcement.

*Comment:* Total project cost seems higher than previous years.

Examined budget in PRISM, information was different than what was shown in HWS. Noted that the contract agreement shouldn't show line item of administrative overhead.

#### **Big Quilcene River Habitat Restoration Phase 3**

There were substantive changes from preapplication to final application.

*Comment:* How do you envision the regrading happening down on the ground?

*Response:* Clearing will take place, extent of regrading will be discussed in the near future. Still conceptual. Location of channel spanning jams to be determined.

Proposed condition: TAG should review design before proceeding to final design.

*Comment:* How do we ensure that these conditions happen?

*Response:* HCCC will work with the sponsor to make it happen, have good faith but if it doesn't happen we'd talk to RCO about writing it up in the contract.

**Final Condition: TAG should review and concur with 30 or 60% design before proceeding to final design for project**

#### **Lower Mainstem Chimacum Creek Acquisition**

Application was complete.

### **WA Harbor Restoration: Construction Phase**

*Comment:* Why was the cost of the bridge so expensive?

*Sponsor Response:* Needs to be a full highway bridge to accommodate large, heavy vehicles.

*Comment:* How did this project get ranked in the NOPL process?

*Sponsor Response:* Requested full amount from both LE (HCCC and NOPL). NOPL previously funded the design only project. We have a fairly broad funding package for this proposal. We are not asking both LE's to fully fund it. We'd like to have the LE's collaborate and split the difference.

Our process is to first technically rank the project and then have a common sense discussion about how to divide the funding by the two Lead Entities.

**Group Comment:** TAG is comfortable with funding up to 50% (~\$260,000) of the WA Harbor SRFB request.

### **Skokomish River Floodplain Acquisition/Restoration**

Some TAG members ranked this project low because the application was lacking in some details and the match wasn't meeting 15% standard. Others had a hard time figuring out what the sponsor was trying to acquire and whether it was really needed, also seemed some of the property was further from the shoreline and rivers making it a low benefit to salmon (in the shadow of SR101).

*Comment:* Ecosystem wise the property is very valuable, for salmon not as much. Might be beneficial to have focused on fewer, cheaper parcels with the greatest benefit to salmon.

*Response:* The benefit to salmon may not have been outlined well, but consider properties near Purdy Creek wetlands and hatchery returns which drive the system.

*Comment:* Is there a subset of this project that we can move forward on?

*Comment:* Proposal seemed very preliminary, what is the certainty of success? Also the restoration piece wasn't well described or significant.

**TAG supports:** asking sponsors to prioritize parcels to start project and strengthen planting plans

### **Hood Canal Nearshore Fish Use Assessment**

A TAG member asked "If this domain scoring was increased by 10 I'm curious where it would end up?" Several folks questioned the low placement of this project.

*Comment:* This project should move forward, it will help validate the strategy and point system, determine where the fish are, how they are using habitat.

*Comment:* I would like to see this project come back next year with a more concrete study plan.

*Comment:* Bits of this are being done already, how do you bring it all together? Need to manage and compile all this data

*Comment:* First year will be a pilot year and a study plan will be developed. Project scored lower because it is an assessment. Does it bring enough value to outweigh on the ground restoration projects?

**Group comment:** We would feel more comfortable if the first year portion was in the application, and you came back for the second year.

*Sponsor Response:* the project is scalable

*Comment:* We have a multitude of studies that still don't offer the answers; will we ever have a definitive answer since there are so many variables to try and account for?

*Comment:* We need this type of work to fill in our current monitoring gaps

**TAG supports:** Asking the sponsor, HCCC, and partners to develop collaboration for developing a shared research/work plan.

### **Tahuya River LWD Placement Phase 2**

Budget was confusing, restoration piece was lacking, appeared to be no update on the design from preapplication to final application.

*Comment:* there is a possibility that non-anchored wood could move around and be unpredictable.

*Comment:* Landowner would allow some riparian buffer on their land, this isn't clear.

**TAG supports:** asking the sponsor to expand the planting plans

### **Lower Big Beef Creek Restoration Phase 1**

Big Beef is a tough system to work in. This proposal didn't have enough benefit to salmon given the significant compromises around the well and access road. The TAG would like ELJ's, too much road, not enough restoration.

*Response:* too expensive to include wood etc in the budget, and so this is envisioned as two phases.

*Comment:* Where is the sediment coming from? A better understanding of land use activities and potential sediment sources would be beneficial.

*Comment:* Is it an option to abandon the well and the well road? Landowners didn't want to remove the well road.

Concerns about channel avulsion into wetlands, could affect summer chum population. Could use well for temporary augmentation, but it wouldn't provide enough flow to do that well.

System is currently out of balance within the floodplain and its sediment routing, so unfortunately will have to be "broken" (temporary damages while the site begins to restore itself) to reach long-term restoration.

-concern about the 3 culverts at the bottom, river would have to overtop the road.

-Trap and haul/spawn idea

-Need to sit down and chat with the University to see if this project can go forward in a different approach

**Proposal:** remove this project from list if it stays proposed as is- Needs significant alterations/landowner discussions

**TAG supports:** asking UW to abandon the well and/or well access road

### **Proposed Changes to Project Rankings:**

**Action:** Move Hood Canal Nearshore Fish Use Assessment up one slot.

**Condition:** Project scope is limited to year one (phase 1) only.

**Action:** Remove Lower Big Beef Creek Restoration Phase 1 from the funding list if further discussions with landowner don't produce significant changes that the TAG can support.

**Proposal:** Move Maynard Nearshore Restoration below Knotweed Control Riparian Enhancement. The list should reflect projects that have the most benefit to salmon, this project has a high certainty of success but less benefit to salmon. Some members of the group weren't comfortable with moving this project given its high certainty of success. No vote requested and no action taken.

**Final TAG Ranked List:  
(with conditions listed above)**

1. Big Quilcene Delta Acquisition/Restoration
2. Dosewallips Floodplain & Estuary Restoration- 2011
3. Skokomish Estuary Restoration Phase 3
4. Maynard Nearshore Restoration
5. Union River Estuary Restoration
6. Lilliwaup Creek 100% Design Completion
7. Knotweed Control Riparian Enhancement- Year 4
8. Big Quilcene River Habitat Restoration Phase 3
9. Lower Mainstem Chimacum Creek Acquisition
9. Washington Harbor Restoration: Construction Phase\*
11. Hood Canal Nearshore Fish Use Assessment
12. Skokomish River Floodplain Acquisition/Restoration
13. Tahuya River LWD Placement Phase 2
14. Lower Big Beef Creek Restoration Phase 1

\* Lower Mainstem Chimacum Creek Acq. & WA Harbor Rest. Projects tied for 9<sup>th</sup> position

**Next steps:** The final technical ranked list will be forwarded to the HPLC, the HPLC will then review/rank, the HCCC will then submit the final ranked list to SRFB.

**Update from Mike Ramsey (RCO) on projects flagged by the SRFB review panel:**

Big Quilcene River Habitat Restoration Phase 3- Labeled NMI project. Need more information on grading and log structures.

Lilliwaup Creek 100% Design Completion- flagged project. Need more info on benefit to fish. HCCC, LLTK will be working with SRFB on addressing these issues and improving the project proposal.